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Subject: PR 92-154 VE Program

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Gentlemen:

I am not in favor of the VE Program proposal of elimination of the Novice VE test program in favor of testing under the VEC program.

I teach an after school Novice class in an elementary school in Chicago for those in the 6th, 7th and 8th grades from 2:45 P.M. to 3:45 P.M. two days a week. Children are both local and bussed in students. I must comply with the rules of the after school program which confines testing to the same hours. The classes are small, however, we are getting some young people interested in the electronics field as the FCC requested we do. Most of the testing sessions are one to three students, the largest was six. Under the proposed new rules for testing it will require that I have three (3) VE's present. If I have 1 to 3 pupils for a test it means I will have more than or an equal number of VEs per pupil. I have, at the present time, myself as a VE and one other that can make it, however, it isn't that easy to get someone in the middle of the afternoon to want to help. If the purpose of the three VEs is to control cheating I can see the reason with a large number taking the test. The school will not allow me to take students away from school, evenings or Saturdays to take the test, even with parents consent. It is a school program and there are insurance problems to contend with.

The VECs state that under the VEC system the 610s will be processed much faster. This is incorrect as the day the student passes his test the 610 form is in the mail. No time lost mailing it to a VEC for his perusing and a second mailing.

Information has been printed that the Novice VEs make about 9% of the errors on the 610 forms sent in direct. I can understand this as the items A, B, C and D and the accompanying boxes are most difficult to understand. Once you become familiar with the form there is no problem. If the FCC would attach an example sheet for the Novice VEs to follow I am sure the percentage would be no higher than 1%. I would believe the 9% figure is because of the VE that conducts one test once every one to three years. How many errors are there for those of us teaching and making out the 610 forms? Has a study been made? I think it is wrong to use this as a comparison, Novice VE against VEC program.

The persons promoting the change in the VE program states there is no line of communication between the question pool committee and the Novice VE. This is not true as I am sure the FCC would provide the VE name and address of every VE that comes in on a 610 form were it asked for. The same is true for passing other information. I have written 3 or 4 letters to the VECs question pool and never had an answer.

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Again the gentlemen promoting the VEC takeover, is complaining about the Novice VEs not having the correct requirements for testing the Morse Code. There are many tapes and disks on the market for sale to the Novice VEs for testing, all with the correct requirements and, a Novice VE would be foolish not to get one if he/she wants to conduct a test. It saves much time. Has anyone made a study of this or is it just heresy?

I Believe these VEC gentlemen are trying to tear down a good working system for training and testing Novices which has been in effect for years instead of trying to eliminate the problems which they say are present? It is my opinion that the VECs will defeat what the FCC asked the Hams to do, bring our youth into the hobby. I have students who have had their Novice licenses more than a year, I know they can pass their Tech license but will not go to the VEC program for testing.

The second thing that must be considered. This country of ours is large and, between the Rocky mountains and the Mississippi River, there are vast areas where there are only small towns and long distances between them. Is it the FCC's contention that a person wanting to take a Novice test in much of this area must find three (3) Novice VEs to give him/her the test? I would expect this is lack of thinking from the gentlemen promoting the change. The FCC, in the thirties to the sixties, realized the problem and had a testing program for those living more than (I believe approximately 150 miles) from the nearest FCC office. I believe it was called a "Conditional" license. I don't know if it still exists. I would think this distance to travel might be a little far for a Novice test and certainly one or possibly two VEs should be sufficient. Is there really that much of a problem with the Novice testing program in all the years it has been in operation to warrant tearing it apart or is the VEC program looking at an easy way to put \$5.40 in their coffers. Let us not be hasty, think this thing out and be sure we have all phases covered before we make a decision. It would be embarrassing to have to go back and remake changes because the Novice program is going down hill, the boys and girls I teach have always been given a choice of my teaching, Novice or Tech and it has always been "we want to talk around the world", code is no obstacle, however, they would never even know about Amateur Radio were it not for the School Program.

In my opinion this change will be a detriment to Amateur Radio. I become disturbed with those establishing the question pool for the Hobby and which questions I understand are checked and approved by the FCC. Example: On May 4th 1990 I sent a letter to the question pool stating I thought the answer to question 2B-3-1.1 was not correct. The answer given is "Transmit the phrase 'CQ' three times, followed by 'this is', followed by your call sign three times". If I teach the students this as a correct answer the chances of their making a contact is almost impossible. It takes less than 10 seconds to use this answer. Who is liable to hear your call in ten seconds and come back to you for a contact? There are a few others.

The FCC asked me, one of 500,000 Hams, to try to bring young people into the Hobby, to acquaint them with the electronics field, to enhance Amateur Radio and give them a chance to see if they would want electronics as their major in college. Their parents love this idea and thank me all the time.

I am to the point now where, apparently the Question Pool people are throwing so many road blocks in my way such as the VEC testing, questionable answers, too difficult a vocabulary, too difficult questions for 12 to 14 year olds and too many questions. The fun has been taken out of teaching when you run into the above problems. My next move was to try to move into a second school in the City of Chicago with the help of the QCWA, however, I have given this up and am ready to quit in my present location.

Does the FCC really want to disturb the present program?

Respectfully submitted,

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